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ABSTRACT

The relationship between Unesco's task "to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image" and the International Publishers Association's goal of the promotion, through international cooperation, of the right to culture is brought out in this speech. The cooperative efforts of the two organizations in efforts to protect creative intellectual work (copyright) are also mentioned. Other cooperative efforts to promote the free flow of books throughout the world and, in the developing countries, to improve the training of those working in the book industry as well as book distribution techniques are other topics of this welcoming address. (NH)

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Address by
Mr. René Maheu

Director-General
of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(Unesco)

at the opening meeting of
the XIXth Congress of the
International Publishers Association

Paris, 15 May 1972

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Presidents,
Mr. Minister,
Professor Huyghe,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to me, and an honour, to welcome to Unesco House the large number of delegates of national publishing associations who have come from different parts of the world to take part in the XIXth Congress of the International Publishers Association, in company with representatives and observers from several international non-governmental organizations.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the host country, Mr. Maurice Schumann, who has kindly consented to be present at this opening ceremony, and to Professor René Huyghe, of the French Academy, in whom the Organization has always found a sincere and active friend, I should like to say particularly how honoured we are to have them with us today. To all of you, I extend a most cordial welcome. I hope that in these renovated conference rooms, which you are the first to use, you will find a propitious atmosphere for your work.

One of the tasks assigned to Unesco by its Constitution is "to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image". Your Congress therefore seems to us to be of particular significance this year, International Book Year. It is only necessary to look at the items on your agenda to see that the International Publishers Association and the Organization, each in its own field, are both pursuing the same aim: the promotion, through international co-operation, of the right to culture.

Having had what is known as a "mutual information relationship" with Unesco since 1958, before being admitted to the category of "information and consultative relations" in 1962, the International Publishers Association has always given most useful assistance in our Organization's work, particularly with regard to copyright. For example, it regularly takes part in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Copyright Committee, and made a very effective contribution to the work of the two expert committees which met in Paris in 1968 to deal respectively with translators' rights and with the photographic reproduction of works protected by copyright.

More recently, it has been associated with the work of the International Copyright Information Centre, established in the Secretariat last year. The main task of this Centre is to facilitate the transfer to developing countries of rights ceded by copyright holders and to promote arrangements for the adaptation and publication of works, particularly those of a technical and educational character. For this purpose, Unesco collects information from Member States likely to be either recipients or donors about books that can be made available to developing countries on terms as favourable to them as possible. In this

connexion, it receives assistance from the national copyright information centres set up by publishers' associations in countries such as France, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, with a view to helping publishers in the developing countries in overcoming the difficulties they may encounter in securing authorizations to translate or reproduce protected works.

The good results of this co-operation in the field of copyright are all the more significant in that at one time misgivings were felt in some quarters regarding the two aims simultaneously pursued by Unesco in this matter. On the one hand, Unesco considers that the universal right to participate in the cultural life of the community implies that knowledge should be as broadly and readily available as possible, particularly to those who, while standing in greatest need of books and intellectual works as the means to, and vehicles of, education, have but scanty resources for remunerating those who produce them. On the other hand, however, the Organization is fully aware that the moral and material interests of producers must be protected, if the conditions in which creative intellectual work is done are to be such as to ensure that it enjoys due regard within the community, and is able to make its contribution to society as a source of knowledge, spiritual enrichment and progress.

Yet these two essential requirements can perfectly well be reconciled as was shown by the two diplomatic Conferences for the Revision of the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, held at Unesco House in July 1971, in the preparatory work for which publishing circles were closely associated. It must surely be obvious to all that the amendments made to the then existing texts in the interests of the developing countries, and the facilities accorded, as regards translation and reproduction, to the unfavourably situated populations of those countries, must ultimately be of benefit to the intellectual creator, whose audience, and consequently prestige, will be increased by these new provisions, which, sooner or later, will result in added gain for him.

The protection of creative intellectual work is not, however, the only field in which Unesco and the International Publishers Association are co-operating. They are also, for example, working together most successfully - how, indeed, could it be otherwise? - in the carrying out of the long-term world-wide programme of book development that Unesco has been conducting, with increasing effect, since 1966. In point of fact, there is hardly any of Unesco's activities for the promotion of education - in the broad sense of the term - which does not have repercussions in publishing circles. We are working - to quote but a few examples - to develop the production of school textbooks; carrying out experimental functional literacy projects for adults in a dozen or so countries; promoting the production of books in national languages which are not widely spoken and, for this purpose, encouraging the transcription of languages which have no written form; we are setting up pilot specialist libraries, publishing world bibliographies and the yearly Index translationum; or again seeing that international instruments are applied, such as the Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials (Florence 1950) or the two Conventions concerning the international exchange of publications (1958). And all these activities and these undertakings assist in achieving aims which link up

naturally with those of publishers. The International Publishers Association for its part, being able to call on a network of national associations spread over more than thirty countries, is seconding and following up the work of the Organization, both through its sustained co-operation with the National Commissions for Unesco and through the activities it carries out on its own behalf to promote the free flow of books throughout the world and, in the developing countries, to improve the training of those working in the book industry as well as book distribution techniques.

In International Book Year, the purpose of which is to draw the attention of governments and the public to the rôle of books in society, our two organizations have found a fresh opportunity to combine their efforts. The International Publishers Association, which was closely associated in the work of preparing the world campaign, is continuing, in conjunction with other international non-governmental organizations of people professionally concerned with books, to play a particularly active part in carrying it out. Represented by its President on on the Support Committee for International Book Year, the Association made a most useful contribution to the drafting of the Charter of the Book, the ten articles of which set forth the principles which should govern the treatment of books, both nationally and internationally. Today, by holding its XIXth Congress in the context of International Book Year, your Association is once again demonstrating its desire to support Unesco's work. I wish to thank you most warmly for doing so.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking at the stupendous advances made by audio-visual and data processing techniques, publishers have realized that books can no longer be kept apart from the other mass communication media. The press has given wide coverage to the consultations that publishers have held with a view to reaching agreement on measures which will enable them to channel the effects of the revolution taking place in electronics, which is already leading to such developments as the video-cassette, the tele-strip and the video-disc, in the best interests of their profession.

Nor is this all. At a time when certain thinkers feel justified in prophesying - frequently, indeed, through the medium of books - the imminent extinction of the "Gutenberg Galaxy", ought we not to reconsider the problems of publishing as a whole? When there are so many countries in which inexpensive, high-quality books are readily available but the proportion of non-readers nevertheless remains extremely high, ought we not to investigate means not merely of bringing books to the reader but also and above all of bringing the reader - and even the non-reader - to the book? Not all books, it is true, can hope to appeal to the public straight away; but is it reasonable to leave them individually to win their own way, unaided, into the minds and hearts of their potential readers? Would it not be possible, for example, to plan nation-wide campaigns to promote reading - and I do mean reading, not advertising campaigns for the launching of books - which would be varied enough to meet all the needs and aspirations of the public and at the same time to take account of the many different aspects and trends of production?

In any event, all that the publishers gathered here may have to say concerning the nature of the problems by which they are confronted and the means they contemplate for their solution; everything they may be able to do during International Book Year to promote book production and distribution and so to help in satisfying, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the immense need for reading-matter that exists today all over the world, afflicting vast numbers of people as by famine; in short, all the advice and all the suggestions you may give, all the measures you may recommend for the development of books and of reading by means of international co-operation will, I can assure you, be studied with the greatest interest by the Organization. For the particulars which a hundred or so countries have so far communicated to the Secretariat concerning their programmes of activities for International Book Year make it abundantly clear that books are still regarded as pre-eminent means of acquiring knowledge and pursuing thought, contributing to the fulfilment of the individual and to the progress of society.

Besides being an essential means of development, particularly in the less favourably situated countries, books are also needed everywhere as a potential force for international understanding and peace, at least so far as, by contributing to the mutual appreciation of cultures, they seek to bring men closer to one another. But let us make no mistake: not only does everything depend, in this case as in that of the mass media, on the content of the message; but, besides this, availability, in itself, is by no means an unmixed blessing. Indiscriminate mass distribution, particularly when practised unilaterally, is liable to be conducive to a uniforming of <u>mores</u> and values under the ascendancy of the richest or most powerful. In Unesco's view, however, the moral unity of mankind is in no way synonymous with uniformity of civilization. No organization is more conscious of, and concerned about the diversity of cultures. It puts its faith and its hope in mutual communication, consisting in a multitude of exchanges and multifarious intercourse. And the slogan we have taken for this International Book Year - "Books for All" - was chosen in the hope that one day there will be books <u>by all</u> available for all.

That, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the spirit in which Unesco is welcoming you; and that is the ideal I would set before you in conveying my most cordial good wishes for the success of your work.